

Changes made to the Unemployment Reporting System

The U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) has developed a new method for estimating unemployment and the unemployment rate at the state and local level. This will make changes to the monthly economic data produced by KDOL for Kansas and its counties.

The January 2005 employment estimates for Kansas, reflecting the new BLS method, were released on March 11, 2005.

This new method is designed to improve statewide employment and unemployment estimates and estimates for smaller areas, such as counties. The new method will result in significant changes to our state and local unemployment estimates, resulting in a higher unemployment rate than the previous method, but it does not necessarily mean there are more people unemployed.

The BLS method produces estimates of the total number of unemployed persons and the unemployment rate. The estimates are not a summation of the number of individuals collecting unemployment benefits. The number of people unemployed is estimated through a complex statistical process using many data sources.

BLS research has shown that in many cases the current method for developing estimates has

overstated employment and understated unemployment at the state and local level across the country. The new method will produce more accurate and reliable estimates and improve estimate responsiveness to changes in the economic situation.

The BLS also will incorporate newer metropolitan area geographic designations. The

Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) for Wichita, Topeka and Kansas City will have additional counties added to them.

Past data on employment and the unemployment rates shown on the KDOL Web site will be recalculated with the new BLS method, including the larger MSAs, to provide accurate comparisons for researchers.



Food Piles Up

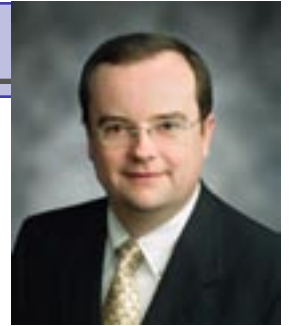
Thank you to all contributors to Project Topeka! The annual community food drive received \$1,297 in cash plus 280 pounds of food from generous KDOL employees in Topeka. That brought the total value of KDOL contributions to \$1,467. The single largest event in KDOL's Project Topeka campaign this year was a garage sale at 401, which netted \$281.



Who's under that hat?

One special event to raise money for KDOL's Project Topeka campaign was a Hat Parade. Judges selected the hats above as prize winners. They are (from left) Best Match to Wearer, Sharon Lantis, Credit Union; Most Original, Sue Henke, Communications; Best Hat, Faith Farrell, Contributions; and "I can't believe you are wearing that hat!", Pam Wherrell, LMIS.





Competition in our Marketplace

The huge following for reality television programs such as *American Idol*, *Survivor* and *The Amazing Race* illustrate how much people enjoy watching competition. March Madness means people across the country will spend hours watching their favorite college basketball teams compete for championships. There also is competition in the business world – it's Wal-Mart versus Target and Dillons versus Food-4-Less. But we don't have to worry about competition in government. Or do we?

We do have competition. There are private companies ready

and waiting to take over many responsibilities once believed to be only the tasks of government. Reduced availability of state and federal dollars is making the money government agencies have depended upon to supply and improve programs more competitive. We no longer get grants just because we ask for them. We must show that we will make the best use of the available resources.

At KDOL, we must be aware of what the industrial monopolies learned in the early 20th Century – you have to do your job in the best, most efficient method possible

or your customers will demand a better system.

KDOL always must strive to keep our focus first and foremost on our customers – the 69,000 employers and the 1.3 million workers in Kansas. We must be open to finding improvement in the services we provide and the manner in which we provide them. We have to demonstrate that we will use our resources efficiently, so that our customers don't look for someone else who can run a faster race. ❖

What is IAWP and what's in it for me?

The International Association of Workforce Professionals (IAWP) is a nonprofit professional association committed to education for workforce professionals.

IAWP has more than 17,000 members worldwide and its mission is to enhance, serve and support those interested in workforce development programs.

The more than 90-year-old organization provides member benefits that include education and training, advocacy, recognition and networking.

The Kansas Chapter, one of 50 in the United States, includes members from throughout KDOL and the Department of Commerce. They meet on the state and local level. Programs range from

review of legislative issues to local businesses to other state agencies. The state spring conference will be in Topeka on April 14-15. "Take a Walk on the Wild Side" will convene at the World Famous Topeka Zoo. Speakers will include the zoo director, Iraq veterans, the director of HealthQuest and a representative from KPERS.

"The organization has provided me with many learning and leadership opportunities through my nearly 30-year membership" said Linda Hubbard, BOS director. "This included serving as the Legislative Chair at the International level which gave me the chance to visit Congressional leaders in Washington, DC, to ask for their support of our programs.

All members noted that an

important benefit of membership was meeting new people, building friendships with colleagues and having the opportunity to attend informative meetings around the state and country.

"I've always enjoyed the monthly luncheons and the variety of speakers," said Vikki Skinner, Integrity." Our spring conferences and fall institutes, I've enjoyed the most. That's where you meet other agency employees that you would otherwise never cross paths with in your normal work day. I encourage everyone to become a part of a great organization."

The opportunity for recognition from your peers for a job well done also is cited as a membership benefit. "IAWP can provide

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Employee Updates

Service Awards

APRIL 2005

<i>10 years</i>	
Flemia Eusebio	Research Analyst III, LMIS
<i>20 years</i>	
Nelsonna Barnes	Administrative Law Judge, Workers Comp
Melanie Manry	Mgmt. System Analyst II, AJLA
Sonja Weisgerber	Program Consultant II, Benefits
<i>30 years</i>	
Tina Burghart	Public Service Exec. II, LMIS
Larry Curtis	State Auditor II, Contributions
Patricia Hickey	Administrative Asst., Contributions

Compliments

Tim Triggs, Employment Standards

Thanks again for your help. Your first contact (e-mail) was extremely prompt and then for you to call me back within hours with additional help at my request was great! I appreciate your customer service skills.

Carlotta Keel, Kansas City UI Call Center

Carlotta was the most helpful, patient person I have dealt with. I have not had that type of customer service in a long time.

Chastity Dexter and Sandi Ray, Benefits

Our business was enrolled in Shared Work in 2002. Just wanted to say "thank you" to you and the

Retirements

Donna McCain, program specialist II in the Topeka Unemployment Insurance Call Center, will retire April 1 after 14 years with KDOL. She started in 1991 as an office assistant II in Benefits. In 1998 she transferred to UI as a program specialist I.



Russ Vawter retires April 1 from the Kansas Department of Labor (KDOL) following 36 years of service to the agency. He was the Director of the Kansas Job Service



automated reporting system for 23 years. For the past 12 years he has been the budget director and mainframe information technology manager for the Labor Market Information Systems division.

New Employees

Janeth Dominguez is the new administrative specialist in Workers Compensation in the Wichita office. She is a graduate of Wichita Southeast High School and currently attends Butler County Community College. She and her husband, Juan, have a son, Julian.

Susie Sachs is a program consultant I in Workers Compensation in Topeka. Her husband, Bob, also works for the State, in the Division of Purchases. They have two grown children and two black labs. She currently is president of the Topeka Rose Society.



Denise Segelquist is the new administrative assistant in Contributions in Topeka.



Dawn Feldkamp, AJLA-TS

We recognize and appreciate the work everyone on the AJLA staff did in getting Arkansas JobLink ready for production. Your dedication, especially, shines. We know you were up in the middle of the night on many occasions, plus you worked weekends and nights and days off making sure we were able to launch the system. You are a good example of a dedicated and caring professional.

staff that worked with us during our "down time." Our goal was to keep our core group of employees together so that when our work load started to grow we would still have a strong employee base. We have grown from a low of 346 employees in March 2003 to nearly 500 employees today.

So many people work very hard and never get a formal thank you. Please share this with all those in your area that helped with our paperwork.

Dear John...

From the desk of John Polzar,
Special Assistant to the Secretary

Is it okay to play computer games on our PCs at work? And can we use them for personal business?

The *Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy* spells out how employees are expected to use their computers and other KDOL equipment. Foremost, employees must remember that the equipment is state property and not their personal property. Anything they do or create on their computer is part of the KDOL network, so there is no personal privacy for the information.

However, we know there are times an employee needs to use the equipment for non-business purposes, such as looking up school information for a child or sending a quick e-mail message. Like personal telephone calls or use of the fax machine, these should remain brief and not interfere with your work or the work of others.

When using the computer, the issue of network security is of primary importance. Computer viruses and other security risks are what we each must help avoid. Your KDOL computer and the entire network must be protected from these threats if we are to safely continue our mission. This can be as simple as being sure to log-off when you leave for an extended time, especially overnight.

It also means you must be careful about the Internet sites you visit and extremely careful about downloading information from non-secure sites on the Internet. Games played over the Internet fall into this category. They often are a means for an infection to enter our network. Additionally, employees playing online games can cause network slowness for

those trying to do actual work. Downloading games or programs from the Internet on your KDOL computer or playing games over the Internet is strictly prohibited. If there is a non-game program you need for work purposes, contact Information Technology to help you do the download.

The games which come with your computer – Solitaire, Minesweeper, etc. – may be played only when you are on a break. Again, please do not abuse the privilege.

For more information about acceptable use, see Directive # 700-01-05. For information on how to protect your PC at home, see the article on page 6.

If you have a question, please submit it either through interoffice mail or via e-mail to John Polzar at john.polzar@dol.ks.gov or Sue Henke at sue.henke@dol.ks.gov.

SAFETY NOTES by Terri Sanchez, Safety Consultant

Relief for Eyestrain

One of the best things you can do for your eyes when working on computers, or in other eye straining situations, is to take short breaks. Simple one-minute eye exercises done every 20 minutes can reduce eye fatigue.

Change focus by glancing across the room or look out the window and focus on objects at least 20 feet away. Then, lightly cup your eyes with your palms, and relax for 60

seconds. Or, look away from the screen, and roll your eyes up and down, around and side to side.

If you experience chronic eye problems, have your eyes examined by an eye care professional. If you work on a computer, be sure to tell the doctor. Anyone who works regularly on computers should have annual eye exams, and people



over age 40 may need more frequent checkups.

REMINDER

Please turn your address changes in to the HR office as soon as possible. Along with updating your personnel file, it also updates your records for any other correspondence you get from the state including your health insurance benefits.

The Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP) distinguishes small employers who operate an exemplary safety and health management system. In Kansas 32 businesses have qualified for SHARP and there currently are 25 worksites active in the program. For more about SHARP, see the November 2004 *Inside Source*.

Look who's SHARP – Lowen Corporation

Employee safety is a core value at Lowen that starts at top management and filters down to all employees. Safety is integrated into the planning of its facilities in Hutchinson.

"SHARP recognition encourages the company to make a collaborative effort among employees, supervisors and managers to find concerns and implement solutions," said Debra Lizalde, Lowen Corporation Human Resources. "SHARP achievement is not a one-time commitment, but an ongoing dedication to continually

look at ways to improve safety."

Achieving SHARP recognition is a challenge to go beyond regulatory requirements to provide a safe working environment, she noted. Lowen gained SHARP status in September 2002.

"We've been able to overcome several ergonomic concerns by repositioning machine controls. We've initiated job rotation for most of the workstations, reducing the number of muscle strains and repetitive-type injuries.

"Production and quality ultimately reap the rewards when employee morale is improved by a company which gives precedence to employee safety," Lizalde said.

She points out that the services of KDOL consultants helped guide Lowen toward a proactive approach, instead of only fixing problems found because of an accident.

"The consultants walk you through the process of improving your own exceptional safety program," she said.



Lowen Corporation was founded in 1950 by Mike Lowen in a converted garage behind his house in Hutchinson. Mike, a sign painter by trade, was introduced to screen printing in the early '50s as a way to speed production of the real estate and truck side signs that he was painting by hand.

Family owned and operated throughout the last five decades, Lowen has continued to grow and invest in new technology and processes.

Today the company is comprised of two operating divisions: Lowen Sign Company, the nation's leading manufacturer of real estate related signage, and Lowen Color Graphics, a leader in the design and manufacture of fleet, promotional and OEM graphics.

With manufacturing facilities in three states and a nationwide team of sales professionals, Lowen Corporation continues its legacy of high quality products, friendly customer service, and competitive pricing that today's business climate demands.

For more information, visit the website at www.lowen.com.



Top Ten Cyber Security Tips

At work, KDOL Information Technology works to keep your computer safe. But you may be vulnerable at home. The following can help you protect yourself on your home computer(s).

1. Don't open emails or attachments from unknown sources. Be suspicious of any unexpected email attachments, even if they appear to be from someone you know. If you use the preview pane for your Outlook or Outlook Express e-mail, be aware that it is opening the mail and triggers most viruses and Trojans. It's best to turn the preview pane off on your inbox so only mail you select is opened. Should you receive a suspicious email, the best thing to do is to delete the entire message, including any attachment. If you are determined to open a file from an unknown source, save it first and run your virus checker on that file, but also understand that there is still a risk. If the mail appears to be from someone you know, still treat it with caution if it seems suspicious. Be careful if you receive many copies of the same message from either known or unknown sources. Remember, even friends and family may accidentally send you a virus.

2. Use "anti-virus software" and keep it up to date. Anti-virus software is designed to protect against known viruses so you don't have to worry. But with new viruses emerging daily, anti-virus programs need regular updates.

3. Protect your computer from Internet intruders – use

"firewalls." Firewalls create a protective wall between your computer and the outside world. They come in two forms, software firewalls that run on your personal computer and hardware firewalls that protect a number of computers at the same time.

4. Regularly download security updates and "patches" for operating systems and other software. Check your software vendors' web sites regularly for new security patches or use the automated patching features that some companies offer. Ensure that you are getting patches from the correct patch update site. There are available software programs that can perform this task for you on your home PC.

5. Use hard-to-guess passwords. Mix upper case, lower case, numbers, or other characters not easy to find in a dictionary, and make sure they are at least eight characters long.

6. Back-up your important computer data on disks or CDs regularly or make sure your information is stored on the network. You should make regular backups of all your important data. And make sure you have your original software start-up disks handy and available in the event your computer system files get damaged.

7. Don't share access to your computers with strangers.

8. Disconnect from the Internet when not in use. Remember that the Digital Highway is a two-way road. Disconnecting your



computer from the Internet when you're not online lessens the chance that someone

will be able to

access your computer.

9. Check your security on a regular basis. When you change your clocks for daylight-savings time, reevaluate your computer security. Check what settings you have and make sure you have the security level appropriate for you.

10. Make sure you and those who use your computer know what to do if it becomes infected.

– This information was provided by the National Cyber Security Alliance, which is sponsored, in part, by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.



Calendar

Friday,
June 3, 2005

Last day to use
any vacation
overage

Speech, Speech!

Becky Sanders, Appeals, spoke to the Washburn (School of Law) Business Law Society February 21 about unemployment insurance law.

Do you have an achievement or an honor (personal or professional) you would like to share? Please submit it to sue.henke@dol.ks.gov. Items to be printed will be determined by Marketing and Communications and are subject to editing and space availability.

I'm here to help Mommy!



The Infants-at-Work policy at KDOL has been in place since December 2003. The third baby to take advantage of the program is Thomas Schmidt, pictured above

with his mother Tammy, Human Resources. Past participants were in Workers Comp and the Wichita contributions office.

New parents, by birth or adoption, are eligible to participate though the first 180 days after birth or adoption (Directive 300-07-03). The family-friendly policy is designed to ease some of the pressures on new, working parents.

Similar programs are being used in other state agencies, including Administration, Agriculture,

Commerce, Transportation and Insurance. Many private companies also have these policies.

Thomas was born on November 22 and joined the KDOL workforce on January 31. There, he has acquired a large set of new “aunts and uncles.”

“He enjoys people talking to him. He just grins,” said Mom. “Everyone comments on how much he has grown and changed since he has been here.” ❖

There is a **LIFELINE**

Life got you down? Feeling stressed? You should call the LIFELINE Employee Assistance Program (1-800-284-7575).

LIFELINE is a voluntary, confidential, free service that provides employees and their immediate family with professional counseling and referral services. LIFELINE employee benefits provide both telephone counseling and referral and one to four visits with a professional counselor.

Help is available right away for personal problems, family conflicts or job-related stressors. Even if the caller is unsure what the problem is, he or she can call LIFELINE 24-hours-a-day. A LIFELINE counselor will help assess the problem, offer short-term counseling when appropriate, offer resources and

follow up to make sure that problems or concerns have been adequately addressed.

LIFELINE counselors can help with a wide variety of problems:

- Day-to-day stresses
 - Financial and legal problems
 - Depression and anxiety
 - Major life traumas
 - Problems with co-workers or supervisor
 - Marital and family issues
 - Drug and alcohol issues
 - Child care and elder care concerns
- ... or anything else that is getting in the way of peace and happiness.

To discuss a problem or concern, call LIFELINE at 1-800-284-7575. Callers will receive confidential, free help right away. ❖



IAWP, continued

a vehicle for professional development through state, region and international offices. The IAWP has long looked after the interests of the workforce and the people who serve them,” said Sandra Lassley, HR/Training.

“IAWP is like most organizations—if you put effort into it, you will reap the rewards,” Hubbard said. “I urge you to join, volunteer for a committee or run for an office. Once you have gotten acquainted with the organization, volunteer to serve at a higher level—I believe you will find it worth your time!”

At an annual dues payment of only \$1 a week (\$52 per year and it can be paid through payroll deduction after the first year), IAWP can be a professional development bargain.

Registration information is included with this issue of the *Inside Source*. ❖

International Association of Workforce Professionals

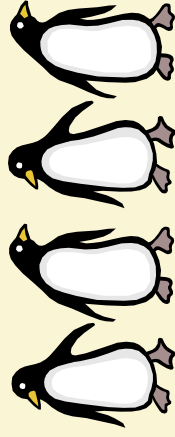
SPRING CONFERENCE



7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Friday - April 14 - 15, 2005

Gage Park Zoo Conference Bldg.



"Take a Walk on the Wild Side"

The fall conference will be at the new conference building at the Gage Park Zoo. Some of the speakers and presenters are:

Secretary Garner - Department of Labor
Jack Riekerson - Division of Personnel Services
Cheryl Miller - HealthQuest
Mike Coker - Director of Gage Park Zoo
Kristin Scott - Creative Business Solutions
Diana Berry - KPERS
Regis Walsh - Iraq Veteran



**Fabulous door prizes
will be given away!**



REGISTRATION



Cost:

☐ \$20.00 Members

☐ \$25.00 Non-members

Name: _____

Work Location: _____

Amount Enclosed: _____

Please have your registration in by April 12th.

Send to: Marita Peerenboom
401 SW Topeka Blvd.
Topeka, Kansas

Or e-mail: marita.peerenboom@dol.ks.gov

Early Bird

Thursday, April 14th
5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Clubhouse Inn
Located at Wanamaker & I-70
Phone 785-273-8888

Clubhouse Inn will have a block of rooms,
ask for "IAWP Conference."